



Course: TiM111 – *Congregational Counseling*
 Session: Fall 2023
 Instructor: Shawn Otto, MABC

1.0 Catalog Description

Students are trained in skills for mental health intervention in the congregation and community. Topics include premarital counseling, grief counseling, marriage counseling, parenting and referral training.

2.0 Course Objectives

The student will develop a working knowledge and ability to apply the principles of God’s Word in a manner that is theologically accurate and consistent with compassionate care for the hurting in their congregation and community. This course will contribute to the development of the following core objectives:

Sufficiency of Scripture Goals:

- Understand how the Bible views the primary problems and solutions of humanity.
- Use the text of Scripture to connect the work of the Redeemer to a counselee.

Academic Excellence Goals:

- Critically engage with peers in applying the theology of Scripture to challenging counseling situations.
- Cultivate a biblical understanding of mental health issues, and grow in wisdom and skill to minister wisely, confidently, and compassionately in the face of hardships.

Spiritual Development Goals:

- Grow to be more like Christ through a greater understanding of His Word.
- Gain a better understanding of areas where the student needs to personally take steps of growth.

Relationship Development Goals:

- Build meaningful friendships through online interaction, applying counseling principles to one another and praying for one another.

Equipping for Service Goals:

- Gain knowledge and skills that can be used in local church ministry both to counsel hurting people and to teach others to do the same.
- Learn how to communicate the truth of the Bible in a loving and honest way understanding both the condition of the counselee and the need for change.

3.0 Course Materials**3.1 Computer and Internet Access**

All students must have a computer and Internet access that are both reliable and sufficient for regular use. I strongly recommend the use of high-speed internet service and a computer not more than 4 years old. Unless otherwise stated, students must submit assignment files in one of the following formats: Microsoft Word, Google Docs, or pdf.

3.2 Required Textbooks

There are three required textbooks for this course:

- Tripp, Paul David, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2002). ISBN-10: 0875526071
- Scott, Stuart, *From Pride to Humility: A Biblical Perspective* (Bemidji: Focusing Publishing, 2002). ISBN-10: 1885904371
- Holy Bible – Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture citations in this class will be from the *English Standard Version*, but other acceptable translations to be used in this class include: *King James Version*, *New King James Version*, *New International Version*, *New American Standard Bible*, or *Holman Christian Standard Bible*. Any student who wishes to use a translation other than those listed here may do so for personal study and enrichment, but quotations for class assignments must come from one of these listed.

Additionally, there will be several supplemental resources posted in Canvas for each topic covered in Weeks 3-10. These resources are optional reading but will enable the student to further explore particular topics he/she chooses to use for Counseling Manuals (discussed below).

4.0 Course Requirements**4.1 Class Participation**

Weeks run from Monday through Sunday (like a traditional academic week). Each student will be expected to participate in this class in the following five ways:

4.1.1 Mini-Lectures – viewed by Tuesday, 11:59pm Eastern

Students will watch six approximately 10-minute pre-recorded “mini-lectures” per week. These mini-lectures form the foundation of the instruction for that week. Adequate time, attention, and note-taking should be given to each of these mini-lectures.

- Week 1: Biblical Counseling
- Week 2: Growing and Changing
- Week 3: Suffering and Grief
- Week 4: Communication and Conflict Resolution
- Week 5: Premarital
- Week 6: Marriage
- Week 7: Parenting
- Week 8: Anger
- Week 9: Fear, Worry, and Anxiety
- Week 10: Sexual Lust

4.1.2 Weekly Reading Schedule – due Tuesday, 11:59pm Eastern

Week	Dates	Reading
1	Sep 11-17	None
2	Sep 18-24	Tripp, <i>Instruments</i> (chs. 1-6, appendices 3-4)
3	Sep 25-Oct 1	Tripp, <i>Instruments</i> (chs. 7-10)
4	Oct 2-8	Tripp, <i>Instruments</i> (chs. 11-14) Supplemental resources (see Canvas)
5	Oct 9-15	Scott, <i>Pride to Humility</i> Supplemental resources (see Canvas)
6	Oct 16-22	Supplemental resources (see Canvas)
7	Oct 23-29	Supplemental resources (see Canvas)
8	Oct 30- Nov 5	Supplemental resources (see Canvas)
9	Nov 6-12	Supplemental resources (see Canvas)
10	Nov 13-17	Supplemental resources (see Canvas)

4.1.3 Online Discussion Forum – Wednesday (by 8:00am Eastern), Thursday, and Friday

Students must participate in the online discussion forum and they must be done on time. In order to make proper use of the students’ and instructor’s time, there will be a strict posting schedule for online discussion.

- Textbook reading must be completed by the **Tuesday** of the week the reading is assigned (see “Weekly Reading Schedule” above). For example, the Tripp reading for Sep 18-24 must be complete by Tuesday, September 19.

- Your first submissions to the online forum must be posted by **8:00am Eastern Wednesday**.
- From Wednesday to Friday you must be online every day. You will be expected to read the posts of others and to respond at least 1 time each day. This means that **you must make an initial post for each assigned question or assignment and then you must post 3 additional times (one time each Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday) to the posts of others**. If Week 2 has three questions/assignments, you will have a total of six posts for that week (one for each of the three questions/assignments by Wednesday at 8:00am and one response to the work of others on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday). Similarly, if Week 3 has two questions/assignments, you will have a total of five posts for that week (one for each the two questions/assignments by Wednesday at 8:00am and one response to the work of others on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday).

4.1.4 Class Meetings – Thursday, 7:30pm Eastern

The instructor will provide a one-hour live class meeting. Meeting instructions will be provided at the start of the course. The hour will be devoted to: 1) explanation or supplementation of mini-lectures viewed for the session and 2) questions/dialogue from the students.

Class meetings will be held weekly on **Thursdays, 7:30pm Eastern except for October 12 (no class meeting that week)**. These class meetings are mandatory. Exceptions will be given only in unusual circumstances and with prior approval from the instructor.

4.1.5 Small Group Meetings – by Sunday, 11:59pm Eastern

Each student will be assigned to a small group with one or more individuals of the same gender. Each small group will meet for one hour per week at a mutually agreed-upon time. This meeting will be devoted to 1) applying the concepts learned that week to personal or ministry scenarios, 2) discussing the reading assigned for the week, 3) praying for one another, and 4) developing relationships that can be utilized during the class and beyond. *It is recommended that the small group meeting occur subsequent to the class meeting for the week.*

Each week, students will post a 1-page typed summary of their small group meeting, including answers to any questions given, how the subject matter was applied to scenarios given, how the subject matter was applied personally or in ministry, and how the participants prayed for one another. (Content will vary by week.) Small group posts must be submitted **by Sunday, 11:59pm Eastern**.

4.2 Scripture Memorization – due Thursday, 11:59pm Eastern

Each student will memorize Psalm 34 during this course using one of the acceptable translations noted above. Students will take a weekly closed-book cumulative quiz in which they will be required to write the passage from memory.

Upon completing the quiz, each student will be required to highlight each error on the quiz and then submit the quiz, along with a statement indicating that the student wrote the passage from memory without assistance from any source. Quizzes must be submitted weekly **by Thursday, 11:59pm Eastern**.

4.3 Counseling Manuals

Each student will choose three topics covered in the course and prepare a 3-4 page counseling manual for each.

4.3.1 *Titles and Due Dates*

Counseling Manual #1 – due Sunday, October 15

Counseling People Who Face Suffering and Grief **OR**
Counseling People Who Struggle with Communication/Conflict Resolution

Counseling Manual #2 – due Sunday, November 5

Counseling Couples Preparing for Marriage **OR**
Counseling People Who Struggle in Marriage **OR**
Counseling People Who Struggle in Parenting

Counseling Manual #3 – due Sunday, November 19

Counseling People Who Struggle with Anger **OR**
Counseling People Who Struggle with Fear, Worry and Anxiety **OR**
Counseling People Who Struggle with Sexual Lust

4.3.2 *Goal*

To produce a solid user-friendly resource for you – to help you minister (counsel and teach) to people struggling with relationships or emotions and to help you equip others to minister in the same way. The manual should be a tool that can guide you before and during a counseling session and help you prepare to teach on these topics.

4.3.3 *Content*

On the first two or three pages, give biblical and practical perspectives to guide your counseling/teaching. Include working terms like definitions/descriptions/symptoms, key truths/principles, Scripture passages, ministry strategies and steps, assignment (homework) ideas, recommended resources for counselees or trainees for further study, etc.

For Scripture passages, provide a sentence summary of their thrust. (I don't want lists of prooftexts.) You may print the actual text of short (e.g., two lines) Bible references but do not print the text of longer passages.

The last page should be an actual, "camera-ready" Bible study and application assignment that you develop – an original assignment – to give to the counselee at the end of a first or second session.

I will post some examples of submitted works on Canvas. You may not copy these and use as your own. Academic dishonesty will result in a zero for your work on that manual.

4.3.4 *Sources*

Use class lecture and assigned reading materials (books and articles) that address the problem, along with any of your own Bible study and biblical reflection. These are not research papers per se, and no outside research is required, although you may wish to familiarize yourself and mention other biblical counseling resources that address your topic. (I will post several supplemental resources in Canvas.)

4.3.5 *Format*

Each manual must be typed, 1.5-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins, and 3-4 pages in length. Where possible, use an outline format, but don't waste left margin space – use .25 or .3 (not .5) tab and indentions. Use single spacing for detailed subpoint lists and for the printed text of Bible verses. Use parenthetical citations, not footnotes, for Bible reference abbreviations or sources, e.g. (Otto, TiM111 Mini-Lecture) or (Tripp, *Instruments*, 27).

4.3.6 *Submission*

Submit each manual via Canvas **by 11:59pm** on the scheduled due date. Do not submit assignments more than one week early. Until I post your final course grade, keep electronic copies (and back up your computer) of all documents, in case one gets misplaced or deleted in the submission → grading → posting process.

5.0 Course Grading

This course will follow the grading scale outlined by the college:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
94-100	90-93	87-89	84-86	80-83	77-79	74-76	70-73	67-69	64-66	60-63	<60

Each individual assignment is worth 100 points. However, the final grade will be weighted as follows:

- Mini-Lectures 10%
- Class Meetings 10%
- Small Group Meetings 15%
- Online Discussion Forum 10%
- Reading 10%
- Scripture Memorization 15%
- Counseling Manuals 30%

Late work will generally be marked down one letter grade per calendar day it is late.

6.0 Miscellaneous Notes

6.1 Virtual Office Hours

Since I am an instructor as well as a full-time pastor and counseling practitioner, students are encouraged to schedule meetings if possible. Generally, Thursdays and Fridays are most conducive for student interaction, but I will try to be flexible with my schedule since it is assumed that you are also actively balancing multiple personal and ministry schedules.

6.2 Contact the Instructor

The preferred method of contact is through email at sotto@rosedale.edu or call/text 941-780-1720. The Canvas Inbox will be checked, but less frequently.

6.3 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using another person's ideas or thoughts without acknowledging that they are borrowed from someone else. It ranges from copying an entire work to copying a small portion of a work without indicating the source. Plagiarism is intellectual dishonesty and is a serious academic offense. Instructors are expected to watch for plagiarism, to take it seriously when it occurs, and to notify the academic office. Consequences may range from giving no credit for the assignment to giving a failing grade for the course.

6.4 Advice

There are four final pieces of advice that are important related to this course:

- First, since this is an introductory counseling course, we will not be able to exhaust each topic we will cover. Vast quantities of helpful material are available for each subject matter we will touch. Therefore, students are highly encouraged to engage with supplemental resources to continue their growth in knowledge and skill related to areas of need or interest.
- Second, the online forums and small group meetings can be wonderful ways for “iron to sharpen iron” as long as you engage substantively. Please do not see it as simply a requirement to check off the list. You can develop meaningful friendships and encourage one another while sharpening each other’s thinking along the way.
- Third, it is very important to have your writing assignments proofread by others. Grading is a bit subjective, and papers with poor formatting, misspelled words, or sloppy style can be a real challenge.
- Fourth (and finally), the Training in Ministry program is more than just delivering classes; it is about watching God transform us as we submit to Him. If you are struggling in your own spiritual walk, please contact either the instructor or your pastoral supervisor for guidance. It will be very difficult to counsel others if there are significant issues in your own heart.